

Hope, hard-work and love; The case of Nupan Bishwakarma

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NUPAN BISHWAKARMA

How many of us could take on the responsibility of running a family when barely 14-years-old? How many can still see a ray of hope when all their dreams start to fade away? Here is a case of a remarkable 18-year-old young man, from the little town of Siliguri located in West Bengal, whose dedication, hard work and, above all, his love for his family stands as an inspiring example of strength and leadership in the face of adversity.

Nupan Bishwakarma is the most heard and recognized name in Krishnamaya Memorial Nepali High School. An 11th standard Arts student, Nupan is also the school's Prefect and a well-mannered and respected individual. It's said that all his fellow students, who dearly call him

“bhaiyya”, listen to him when he speaks due to their respect towards him and due to their knowledge of his story of struggles.

Nupan is a Kadam Badhate Chalo participant in Siliguri, West Bengal. Having been born and brought up in Shastri Nagar in Siliguri, Nupan lost his father at the age of 14. Now an 18-year-old, he lives with his widowed mother and two younger siblings. In order to take care of his family, Nupan started to work at the young age of 15. Talking about his life and work, this young man said, *“I lost my father when I was 14-years-old. My father was a dealer in a casino; after he passed away I took the responsibility to run the home.”*

“I was very interested in dance, I'd learnt dance for 6 years and so I then taught it for my livelihood for 2 years. I wanted to make dance my career and auditioned for Dance India Dance [a TV reality show] twice, but I didn't make it and I had to return home with great disappointment. Then I left dance and started to sing for a livelihood. I now sing at a bar in Siliguri and make some money to sustain my family.”

Nupan is the sole earner in his family and makes 8000 rupees on average per month. But when asked how much he spends on himself, Nupan candidly replied, *“I don't spend a rupee on myself. I don't get time for that. I go to school at 10 in the morning and come back home at 5:30 in the evening, I leave for work by 6:00pm and come*



back home by 2:00am, then I do my homework and sleep. As of now all I want to do is give as much as I can to my family.”

When KBC launched in Siliguri, a *Freedom To Play (F2P)* camp was conducted in Krishnamaya Memorial Nepali High School and Nupan was one of the brightest among the participants, with active participation, exhibiting leadership skills and strategizing in games. Nupan was selected to participate further in KBC and stood out again during the *Gender Through Sports* workshop and the *Sports Leadership* workshop. These workshops created a lasting impression on Nupan, by introducing him to gender stereotypes and to gender-based violence and giving him the required knowledge to stand and face such situations in his life. After viewing the video *Dastak* during the *Gender Through Sports* workshop, Nupan said, *“All I can say is that I will not turn my face around if someone teases a girl in front of me. I will stand up to them and make them understand what they are doing.”* As KBC aims to build youth leaders across the country, youth such as Nupan who possess leadership skills can be instrumental in making the world a better and a safer place for women.



Talking about the workshops, Nupan said, *“The beauty here is that we met students from other schools, spoke to everyone, shared a lot with these people. We became so comfortable here that we shared things which we never shared even with our best friends. Now they all feel like a family.”*



While talking about his learnings from the workshop he said, “I learned a lot of things here, from the need to respect women to standing up for them and supporting them in making their own decisions. I will start this in my home; I’ll give my sister the freedom to make her own decisions.”

He added, *“We often ignore the violence that occurs around us, especially towards women. Near my house there is a drunkard husband who always hits his wife at night. We knew the violence, we knew that it was wrong, but we didn’t know what to do. But after coming here I can understand what that woman is going through and next time when it happens, I will not sit and watch. People should become sensitive in these matters and collectively act on the same.”*

Nupan wants to stand by the women who face violence in their lives. After his 12th standard, Nupan plans to leave school and work to support his family. Talking about the future, he said, *“Everyone dreams about earning a lot of money, living a luxurious life. I don’t know if I can do all that, but I want to earn a name and make my mother feel proud of me.”* Nupan has now founded a band called *Young Wings* and performs to make a living. He remains a source of inspiration for his juniors in schools and highly admired by people around him.

